

announces the Speaker's appointment of the following Members of the House to the Board of Visitors to the United States Coast Guard Academy:

Mr. COURTNEY, Connecticut
Mr. SHAYS, Connecticut

COMMUNICATION FROM CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Honorable JAMES L. OBERSTAR, Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure:

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,

Washington, DC, July 25, 2007.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker of the House, The Capitol,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MADAM SPEAKER: Pursuant to section 194 of title 14, United States Code, as Chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, I am required to designate three Members of the United States Coast Guard Academy Board of Visitors. I designate Representative Michael H. Michaud (Maine), Representative Mazie Hirono (Hawaii), and Ranking Member John L. Mica (Florida) to serve on the Board of Visitors.

Since its founding in 1876, the Coast Guard Academy, based in New London, Connecticut has accomplished its mission of "educating, training and developing leaders of character who are ethically, intellectually, professionally, and physically prepared to serve their country." The Board of Visitors meets annually with staff, faculty and cadets to review the Academy's programs, curricula, and facilities and to assess future needs. The Board of Visitors plays an important supervisory role in ensuring the continued success of the Academy and the tradition of excellence of the U.S. Coast Guard.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

JAMES L. OBERSTAR,
Chairman.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

HONORING THE 1ST BATTALION OF THE 133RD INFANTRY OF THE IOWA NATIONAL GUARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Iowa (Mr. BRALEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRALEY of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to welcome the members of the 1st Battalion of the 133rd Infantry of the Iowa National Guard home to Iowa after a lengthy deployment in Iraq, and to honor and thank them for their service there.

Today was a momentous day in Iowa as the members of the 1-133rd, known as the "Ironman Battalion," were re-

united with their friends, family, and loved ones at a homecoming ceremony in Waterloo. This day of reunion and celebration has been anxiously awaited in Iowa since the battalion left for Iraq last year. An overflow crowd of thousands packed Riverfront Stadium to welcome the hundreds of men and women home. As they drove the final miles from Ft. McCoy in Wisconsin, Iowans lined the road to wave at the 1-133rd.

Sadly, today was also made bitter-sweet by the absence of two members, Sergeant 1st Class Scott Nisely and Sergeant Kampha Sourivong, who were tragically killed during combat operations in Iraq in September 2006.

It is impossible for those who have not served in Iraq to fully understand the experiences of the 1-133rd, or to comprehend the sacrifices that they and their families have made on behalf of our country. However, I am glad that the Memorial Day special edition of "60 Minutes" gave Americans a small glimpse of the challenges that members of the 1-133rd and their families have faced throughout their long deployment, and more importantly into their incredible perseverance.

Iowans who watched the "60 Minutes" special featuring the 1-133rd saw the story of their friends, neighbors and loved ones who chose to serve and sacrifice when their country called them. We saw the daily danger faced by the 1-133rd in Iraq as they helped deliver fuel to coalition forces. We saw their families missing them and adjusting back home. We saw the hardship and heartache that was experienced by the members and their families when they received the news that their tour of duty was to be extended from April until this summer. And we saw the lives of our fellow Iowans cut tragically short.

For me, the program also reinforced what I had already learned about the members of the 1-133rd from my frequent communications with their commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Ben Corell, that they are men and women of great strength and character who selflessly and bravely put their lives on the line every day for their country in Iraq.

The contributions of the 1-133rd have indeed been crucial to the U.S. mission in Iraq. Throughout their tour of duty in the al Anbar province, one of the most dangerous parts of the country, the 1-133rd detained over 60 insurgents. They completed over 500 missions providing security for convoys, and logged in over 4 million mission miles. They have delivered over one-third of the fuel needed to sustain coalition forces in Iraq.

I hope that it gives members and families of the 1-133rd pride to reflect upon their accomplishments and to know that they are part of the longest-serving Iowa military unit since World War II, and part of the Army National Guard unit which has served the longest continuous deployment of any Na-

tional Guard unit in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. They have made me and so many others proud through their work and their sacrifices in Iraq, and I am incredibly privileged to represent them in the United States Congress.

I believe that the entire country should commend and thank these members and the families of the 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry of the Iowa National Guard for their contributions to the U.S. mission in Iraq. That is why today I introduced a resolution in the House to honor and thank them for their service and sacrifices there. The strong bipartisan support this resolution has from 70 original cosponsors, including the entire Iowa congressional delegation, demonstrates the pride and gratitude that Americans feel toward our men and women serving in uniform.

I look forward to the swift passage of this resolution in the House of Representatives, and I hope that it comes to serve as a genuine expression of thanks from a grateful State and a grateful Nation.

We will be forever indebted to the members and families of the 1-133rd for their service and sacrifice. Again, I would like to commend and thank this incredible battalion for their work, and join their families, friends and neighbors in welcoming them home.

□ 2300

HONORING THE LIFE OF PFC. BRANDON KEITH BOBB

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, Winston Churchill said that, "We are masters of our fate, the task which has been set before us is not above our strength; that its pangs and toils are not beyond our endurance. As long as we have faith in our own cause and an unconquerable will to win, victory will never be denied us."

Army PFC Brandon Keith Bobb believed in these words. He believed in the mission of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He believed in freedom and liberation from tyranny and terrorism.

Private First Class Bobb was born and raised in Port Arthur, Texas, a small town in southeast Texas that I represent. He attended Memorial High School and was a member of the track and field team. His high school coach remembers a young man who exhibited leadership as a high school student. His fellow students looked up to him and followed his examples.

Private First Class Bobb did not get the opportunity to graduate from Memorial High School because of Hurricane Rita. Hurricane Rita reared her vicious head and forced Bobb and his family to evacuate southeast Texas, and they relocated in Florida. He finished high school there.

He did not always want to be in the United States Army. It was in River-view that he decided his career path in life, to become a chef. So, after high school, Bobb enrolled in the Orlando Culinary Academy. However, he quickly decided that this career choice was really not for him, and he decided that he wanted to belong in the United States Army. He knew the United States was at war in action and Iraq, but he enlisted in the Army because he knew it was his duty.

As private first class in the Army, Bobb became a military police officer in the 401st Military Police Company, 92nd Military Police Battalion, 89th Military Police Brigade stationed at Ft. Hood, Texas.

He enjoyed being a military police officer, maintaining law and order on the Army base. According to Private Bobb, he said, "As of now, being a military police officer is the best job in the world."

He was a man of many friends, especially among his brothers in arms in the United States Army. Those who knew him knew a young man that had an easy going personality and a positive outlook on life. He was always cheerful and was a soldier that others looked to for support and to lend a helping hand. He was always thinking of others, according to his friends.

He knew he was lucky in life, and he admitted on his personnel Myspace page that he hadn't always followed the straight and narrow path and had engaged in potentially dangerous activity growing up. But he was confident that that part of his life was behind him, and regardless of how tough he thought he was then, he knew in his heart that he was a real soldier in the Army.

Private First Class Bobb continued and said, The United States Army is where the real tough men are at, my drill sergeants, my battle buddies, my commanders, and first sergeants that stand ready to die for the rest of us every day.

Private First Class Bobb was deployed to Iraq in 2006 and was proud to go over to the vast desert sands of Iraq and defend freedom for the Iraqi people and represent the United States. He believed in his heart what he was doing was right.

But on July 17, a week ago, Private First Class Bobb was traveling in a military Humvee in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad when a bomb detonated near the vehicle. The bomb killed Pfc. Brandon Bobb and two of his fellow soldiers. He was 20 years old. He was due home from duty on July 26. That would have been tomorrow, one week after he gave his life for his country.

This is a recent photograph taken of Private First Class Bobb. This past Monday, this southeast Texas warrior, this son of Texas, came back to his beloved hometown. The citizens of Port Arthur turned out and honored him with a patriot's welcome. A water-made rainbow arch greeted the plane

that carried the fallen soldier as hundreds of individuals from the town waving American flags lined the streets to pay final respects. Mr. Speaker, that's what people do in southeast Texas when our heroes come home.

A lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps, in a recent letter from Iraq, described what it meant to be an American warrior. He said, "Our highest calling: to defend our way of life and Western civilization; fight for the freedom of others; protect our family, friends, and country; and give hope to a people long without it."

Pfc. Brandon Bobb was that American warrior. He embodied what it meant to serve one's country with duty and honor, to put others above himself, and to defend the freedom of all Nations.

We are a grateful Nation for the sacrifice of Pfc. Brandon Bobb. Our hearts and prayers are with his family and his Army buddies.

Mr. Speaker, our young people who go to the valley of the gun and the desert of the sun are relentless, remarkable characters. They go where others fear to tread and where the faint-hearted are not found. These warriors represent the best of our Nation. They are the sons of liberty and the daughters of democracy. These few, these noble few are American warriors who take care of the rest of us.

And that's just the way it is.

IT'S UP TO CONGRESS TO TAKE THE WHEEL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, the President is famous for saying that he is the decider, but earlier this week we found out that when it comes to Iraq the American people want Congress to be the decider.

A poll conducted by ABC News and the Washington Post found that 62 percent of the American people say that Congress, and not the White House, should have the final word as to when to bring our troops home. The poll also found that 78 percent of the American people believe that the President is not willing enough to change course in Iraq. Nearly 60 percent favor withdrawal of our troops, and nearly two-thirds believe that the troop surge will not make things better.

And perhaps the saddest thing of all about this, Mr. Speaker, is that the great majority of Americans who have served in Iraq, or who have had a close friend or relative serve there, disapprove of the way the occupation has been handled.

These findings represent a complete repudiation of the President's policies and leadership, but it also poses a great challenge to Members of Congress. The American people are looking for us to lead. But so far, we've let them down. We haven't done what the American

people sent here us here to do: end the occupation and bring the troops home.

Yes, it's true that this House voted earlier this month to begin withdrawing our troops within 120 days. That was an important step forward, but it doesn't force the President's hand because there aren't enough votes in this House, yet, to make the bill veto-proof.

I know that my colleagues across the aisle are waiting for General Petraeus to issue his report of the surge in September before they decide what to do about Iraq, but I don't know why we're waiting for a report when the report that really matters has already been issued, the National Intelligence Estimate, which we received last week.

It showed beyond a shadow of a doubt that al Qaeda is the greatest threat to America, and it is operating out of Pakistan, not Iraq. By getting caught in the crossfire of a civil war in Iraq, we have been fighting the wrong enemy in the wrong place at the wrong time.

But despite all logic, the administration keeps digging us in even deeper. The press is reporting today that the American command in Iraq has developed a new plan that will keep us fighting and dying there for years more, and at least 2 years more.

This is the worst possible action to take, Mr. Speaker, because it sends the message that our involvement is open-ended. It says to the Iraqi government, you don't have to lift a finger to take responsibility for your country's security because Americans will do the job for you.

Six-and-a-half years later, this administration has pursued an arrogant, go-it-alone foreign policy. It told our allies and the rest of the world to get lost. So it's not surprising that it wants Congress to get lost, too.

But we are a coequal branch. We have a clear mandate from the American people. The American people are telling us, the President is driving us over the cliff. So it's up to the Congress to take the wheel.

Our duty is clear, Mr. Speaker. We must act now to put our country and the world on a better and safer course. We must bring our troops home.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

□ 2315

CHAMP ACT AND DENTAL HEALTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CUMMINGS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my strong support for the Children's Health Medicare Protection Act, entitled CHAMP, of 2007,